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THE HOLY TRINITY

ONE IN ESSENCE AND UNDIVIDED

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT have One Nature, One Essence. Thus the Three Persons are the Trinity, One in Essence.

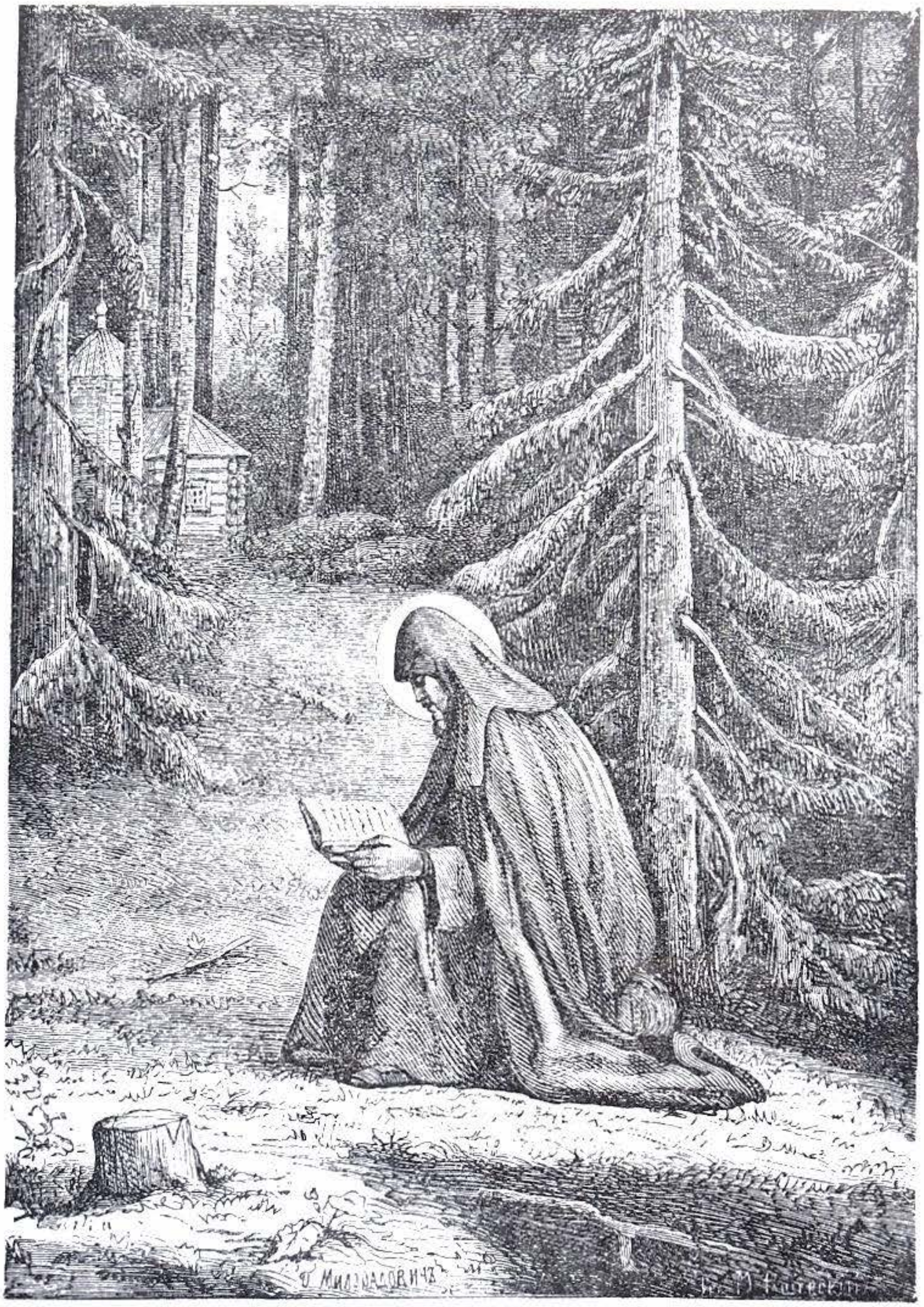
Men have also one nature. But whereas *God* is a Trinity One in Essence, in men there constantly occur divisions... In Father, Son, and Holy Spirit there are One Thought, One Will, One Activity. What the Father desires, that also the Son desires, and that the Holy Spirit desires. What the Son loves, that also the Father loves, and the Holy Spirit. What is pleasing to the Holy Spirit, is pleasing also to the Father and to the Son. Their Activity is likewise one, everything is done jointly and harmoniously.

It is not thus with men. With them there are constant disagreements, diverse desires. A small child already has his own desires, self-will, disobedience to his parents who love him. The older he grows, the more he separates himself from them and, not uncommonly in our times, becomes a complete stranger to them. In general among people there is almost no unanimity of opinion; on the contrary, there are constant divisions in everything, animosities, quarrels between separate persons, wars between peoples. Adam and Eve before the Fall were in everything in agreement between themselves, one in soul. After their sin,

[*Continued on inside back cover.*]

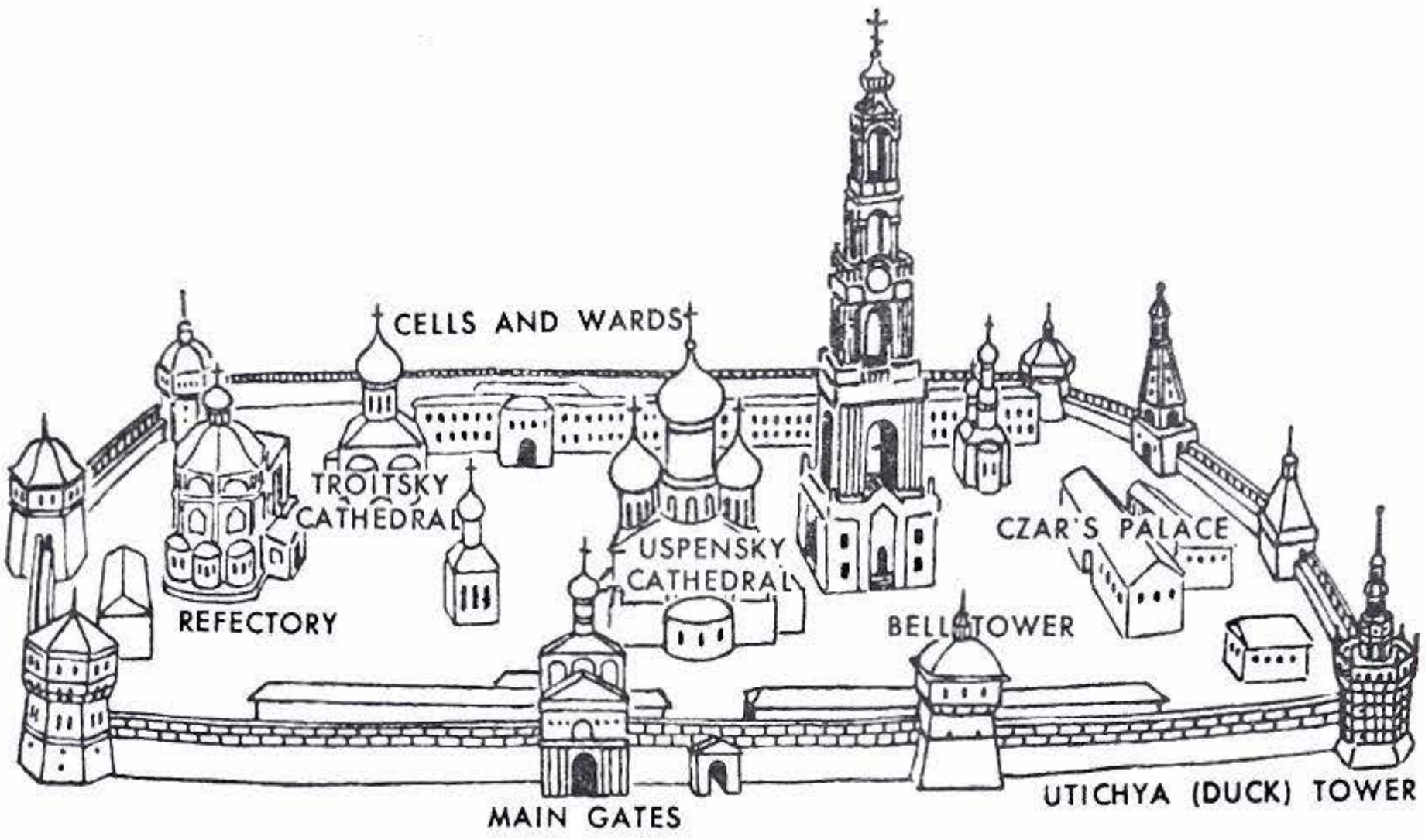
+ Archbishop John Maximovitch

Archbishop John Maximovitch
San Francisco, California
May, 1963



Troparion, Tone 4

UPLIFTER *of virtues,· a true warrior of Christ God,·*
Eagerly rising against passions in this temporal life,
in psalmody, vigils, and fasting thou wert an example to thy disciples.·
Thereby the Holy Spirit abideth in thee,·
And with His activity thou hast been radiantly adorned.·
Since thou hast a daring access to the Holy Trinity,·
Remember thy flock whom thou hast wisely gathered,·
And do not forget, as thou hast promised,· to visit thy children,
O Sergius, our holy Father.·



St. Sergius' Holy Trinity Lavra

The Life of

ST. SERGIUS OF RADONEZH

From the *Life* of His Disciple Epiphanius the Wise

OUR HOLY FATHER SERGIUS was born of noble, devout, Orthodox parents named Cyril and Mary in the year 1314. He was christened Bartholomew and was the second of three brothers, the eldest being Stephen and the youngest Peter. All were raised in strict piety and purity.

Stephen and Peter quickly learned to read and write, but Bartholomew did not so easily learn; he could not put his mind to his studies nor keep pace with his companions. The boy often prayed to God in secret and with many tears: "O Lord, give me understanding of this learning. Teach me, O Lord, enlighten and instruct me."

The great Saint received learning not from men, but from God. One day his father sent him to find a lost foal. On his way he met a monk, a venerable elder, who was standing beneath an oak tree, praying devoutly with many tears. The boy made a low obeisance to him and

St. Sergius depicted performing various monastic tas ks: chopping wood, baking bread.

awaited the end of his prayers. His prayer finished, the monk glanced at the boy and, conscious that he beheld the chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, called him to his side, blessed him, bestowed on him a kiss in the Name of Christ, and asked: "What are you seeking, child?" The boy answered, "My soul desires above all things to understand the Holy Scriptures, and I am sorely vexed that I cannot learn reading and writing. Will you, holy father, pray to God for me, that He will give me understanding of book learning?" The monk raised his hands and his eyes towards heaven, sighed, prayed to God, and said, "Amen." Then, taking from his sachel, as if it were some treasure, with three fingers he handed the boy what appeared to be a little bit of antidoron, saying, "Take this in your mouth, child, and eat; this is given you as a sign of God's grace and for the understanding of Holy Scriptures. Though the gift appears but small, the taste thereof is very sweet."

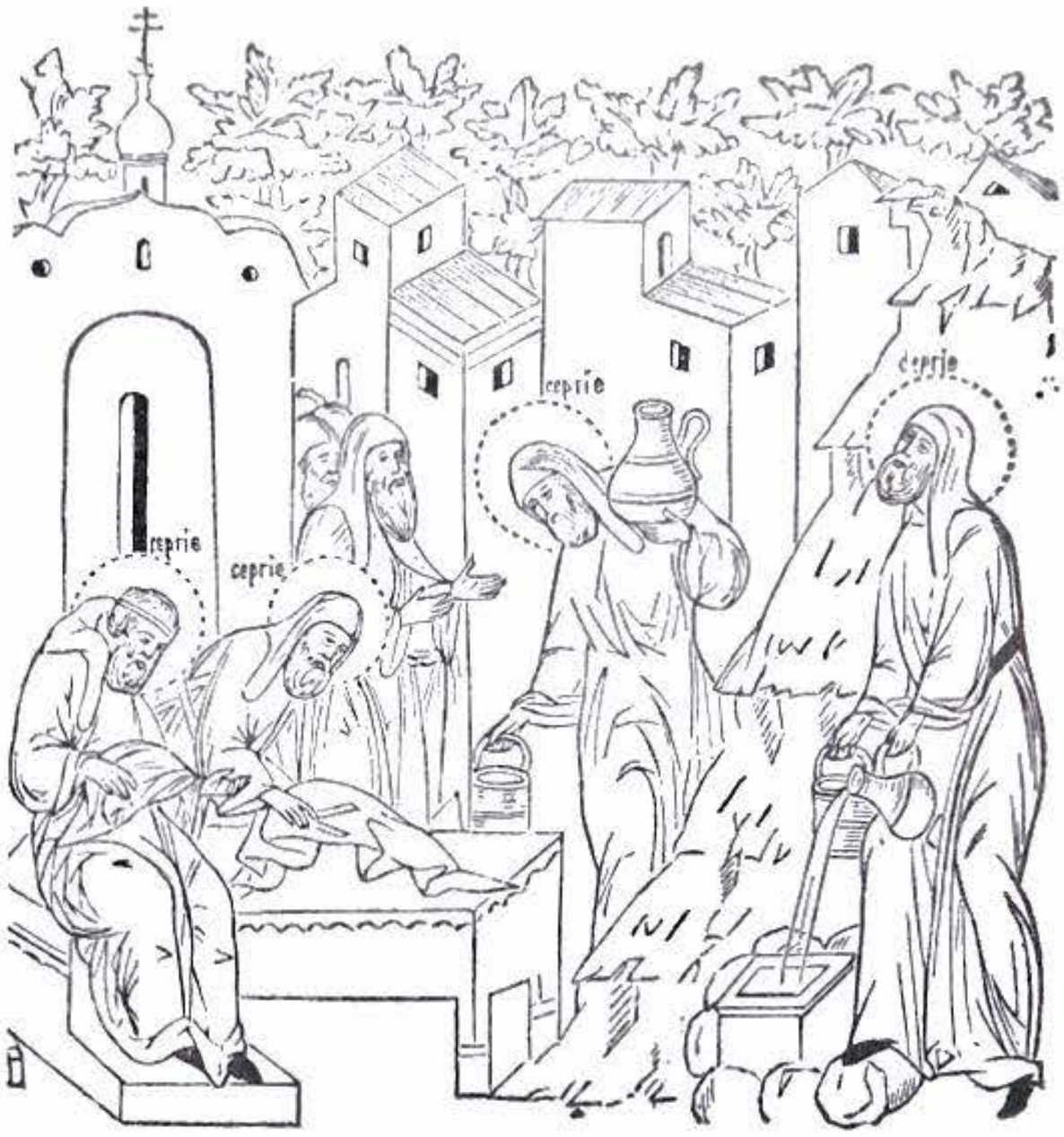
The boy ate, tasting a sweetness as of honey, and said, "Is it not written, How sweet are Thy Words to my palate, more than honey to my lips, and my soul doth cherish them exceedingly?" The monk answered, "If you believe, child, more than this will be revealed to you; from this time forth the Lord will give you learning above that of your brothers and others your own age."

At the boy's urgent request the monk accompanied him to his parents' house, where Cyril and Mary came out to meet him and bowed low before him. The monk blessed them, and they offered him food, but he went first into the chapel and began to recite the Hours, telling the boy to read the Psalms. To the astonishment of all present, the boy, having received the monk's blessing, began to recite in an excellent rhythm; and from that hour he could read.

All returned to the house, where the monk ate, bestowed a blessing on the parents, and calmed their fears; for as they informed him, their son, while yet in his mother's womb, had three times

uttered a cry in church during the Divine Liturgy. "O blessed pair!" he exclaimed. "Why do you fear where there is no place for fear? Rather rejoice, for the boy will be great before God and man, thanks to his life of godliness." He further pronounced that their son would serve the Holy Trinity and would lead many to an understanding of the Divine precepts.

They accompanied him to the doorway, where suddenly he became invisible. Perplexed, they wondered if he had been an angel sent to give the boy knowledge of reading. After this the boy could read any book, was submissive to his parents, attended church services daily, studied holy writings, and constantly disciplined his body and preserved himself in purity of body and soul.



St. Sergius drawing water and making clothes for the brethren.

At this time Cyril moved with his family from Rostov, where there was then much civil strife, to Radonezh, where he settled near the church of the Nativity of Christ. Two of his sons, Stephen and Peter, married but Bartholomew was desirous of becoming a monk. His parents counseled him to wait and to look after them, because they were old, poor, and sick, and had no one else to turn to. Bartholomew gladly cared for them until both of them entered the monastic life. They lived but a few years thereafter.

Bartholomew gave his share of his father's inheritance to his younger brother Peter, keeping nothing for himself. Stephen's wife soon died also, leaving two sons, and Stephen renounced the world and became a monk. Bartholomew went to him and asked him to accompany him in the search for some desert place. Together they explored many parts of the forest, until finally they found a clearing in the middle of the forest, near a stream. After inspecting the place, they prayed and were satisfied, and set to chopping wood.

First they built themselves a hut and then constructed a small chapel. Both agreed that the chapel should be dedicated to the Most Holy Trinity because of the signs that had been given Bartholomew, even

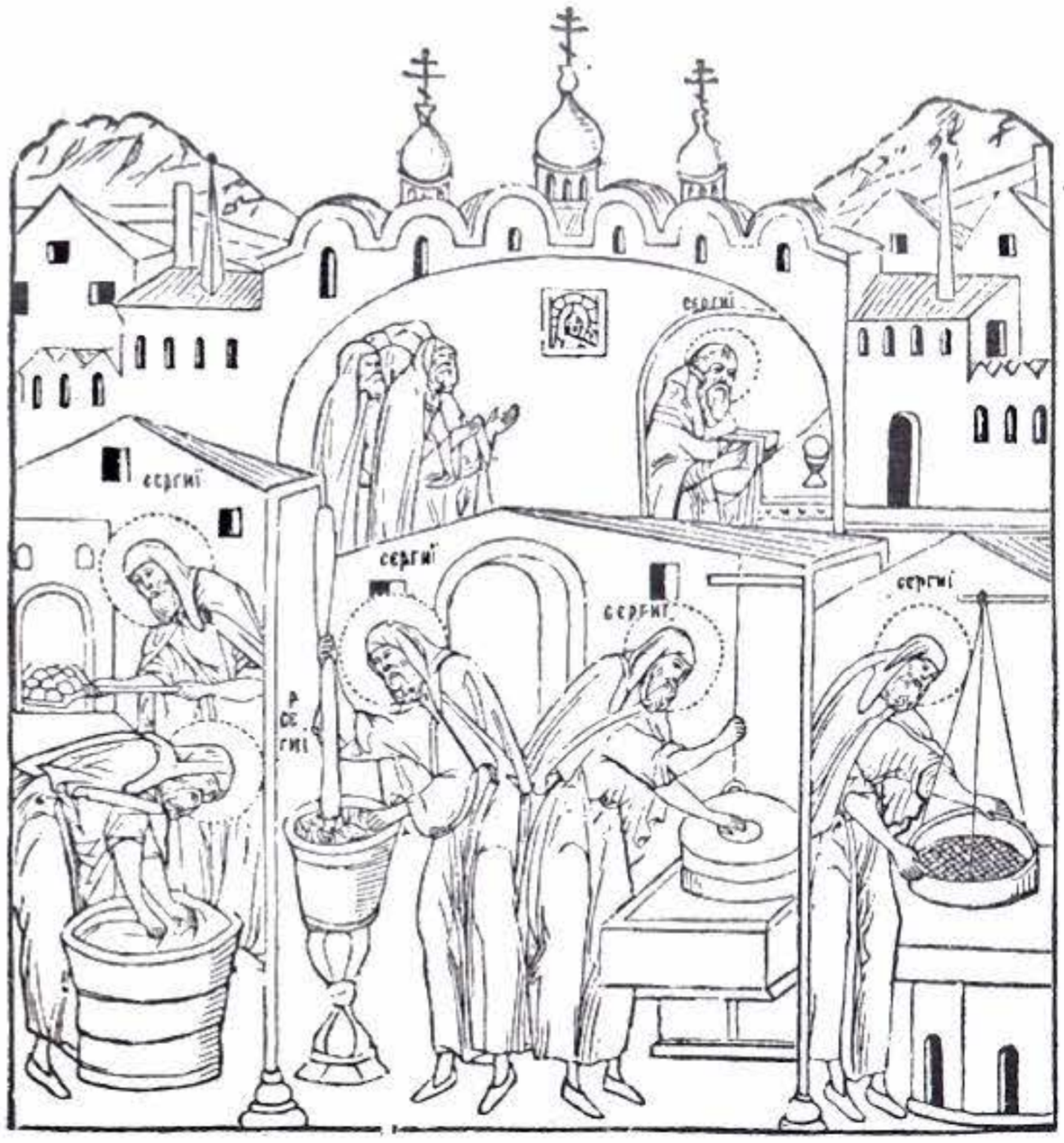
in his mother's womb, that he would be a disciple of the Holy Trinity and would lead many others to believe in the Holy Trinity. Bartholomew then went to obtain the blessing of the ruling prelate, and a priest was sent by Theognost, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia, to consecrate the chapel.

Stephen did not long remain in the wilderness with his brother. He began to find the hardships too great to endure. On all sides was nothing but forest and wasteland. There were no roads or paths, no villages or houses, no means of providing food and drink, and as yet no one came to the Saint or brought him anything. Stephen could not endure all this and left his brother and went to Moscow. There, in the Monastery of the Epiphany, he passed his time in ascetic practices, laboring in this together with Alexis, the future Metropolitan and Saint. The Grand Duke Simeon came to hear of Stephen and his godly life and had him ordained priest and later abbot of the Monastery, appointing him also as his own confessor.

Bartholomew had not taken monastic vows at this time, for as yet he had not enough experience of monasteries and of all that is required of a monk. After a while, however, he invited a spiritual elder, the Abbot Metrophan, to come and visit him in his solitude. In great humility he entreated him, "Father, may the love of God be with us, and give me the tonsure of a monk. From childhood have I loved God and set my heart on him these many years, but my parents' needs withheld me. Now I am free from all bonds, and I thirst, as the hart thirsts for the springs of living water."

The Abbot gave him the tonsure on the seventh day of October, giving him the name *Sergius*, for it was the feast day of the blessed martyrs Sergius and Bacchus. The newly-tonsured monk was twenty-three years old. Blessed Sergius received Holy Communion, and the Grace of the Holy Spirit came upon him and remained with him henceforth. From one whose witness is true and sure we are told that when he partook of the Holy Sacrament, the chapel and all around it was filled with a sweet odor. The Saint remained in the chapel for seven days, eating nothing but one prosphora given by the Abbot, giving himself up to fasting and prayer, having on his lips the Psalms of David.

The Saint in all humility asked the Abbot's instruction on living alone in the wilderness and wrestling with the enemy; and the Abbot, after discoursing with him for a while on spiritual matters, commended him to God and went away, leaving him to silence and the wilderness.



St. Sergius making prosphora

Under different forms the demons often wrestled with the Saint, but they failed to overcome the firm and fearless spirit of the ascetic. At one moment it was satan who laid his snares, at another incursions of wild beasts took place. In particular a bear used to come to the holy man. Seeing that the animal came only to get some food, the Saint placed a small slice of bread on a log, and so the bear learned to come for the meal thus prepared for him. At this time the Saint had no variety of foods, only bread and water from the spring, and a great scarcity of these. Often there was no bread, and both he and the bear went hungry. Sometimes the Saint would give his only slice of bread to the bear, being unwilling to disappoint him.

After some time certain God-fearing monks came to visit St. Sergius. They expressed their willingness to endure the hardships of the place, with God's help and his prayers. Holy Sergius, seeing their faith and zeal, marvelled, and said, "My brethren, I desired to dwell alone in the wilderness and to die in this place. If it be God's will that there shall be a monastery in this place, with many brethren, then may God's holy will be done. I welcome you with joy, but let each one build himself a cell. And let it be known to you, if you come to dwell in the wilderness, that the beginning of righteousness is the fear of the Lord."

To increase his own fear of the Lord he spent day and night in the study of God's word. Being young in years and strong in body, he could do the work of two men or more. The devil now strove to wound him with the darts of concupiscence. But the Saint disciplined his body, mastering it with fasting, and thus was he protected by the grace of God.

The Saint was present every day with the brethren in church for the reciting of the daily cycle of services -- Nocturns, Matins, th e Hours, and Vespers. For the Liturgy a priest came from one of the villages. At first, because of his humility, St. Sergius did not wish to be raised to the priesthood, and especially did not wish to become an abbot. He constantly remarked that the beginning and root of all evil lay in pride of rank, and ambition to be an abbot.

The monks were few in number, about a dozen. They built small cells for themselves within the enclosure and put up gates at the entrance. Sergius built four cells with his own hands and performed other monastic duties at the request of the brethren. The monastery came to be a wonderful place to look upon. The forest was not far away, the shade and murmur of trees hung above the cells; around the church was a space of trunks and stumps where many kinds of vegetables were sown.

The Saint flayed the grain and ground it in the mill, baked the bread and cooked the food, cut out shoes and clothing and stitched them; he drew water from the spring flowing nearby, carrying it in two pails on his shoulders, and put water in each cell. He spent the night in prayer, without sleep, eating only bread and water, and those in small quantities. He never spent an idle hour.

Within a year the abbot who had given the tonsure to St. Sergius died, and the brethren begged the Saint to become their abbot. He protested, but finally agreed to submit to the will of God. And so he, together with two elders, went to Bishop Athanasius of Volynya, begging him to give them an abbot and guide of their souls. But the venerable Athanasius had heard of the Saint and his good deeds, and he replied, "It is you who will be father and abbot of your brethren." The Saint insisted on his unworthiness, but the bishop said, "Beloved, you have acquired all virtues save obedience." And the blessed Sergius, bowing low, replied. "May God's will be done. Praised be the Lord forever and ever." And all answered, "Amen."

Without delay the holy bishop led blessed Sergius to the church, and ordained him subdeacon and then deacon. The following morning the Saint was raised to the dignity of the priesthood and was told to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Later, after speaking to him about the teachings of the apostles and holy fathers, and giving him the holy kiss, the bishop sent him forth as abbot, pastor, and physician of his spiritual brethren.

Our revered father Sergius returned to his monastery, and there the brethren bowed low before him. He blessed them, saying, "Brethren, pray for me. I am altogether ignorant, and I have received a talent from the highest, and I shall have to render an account of it, and of the flock committed to me."

There were twelve brethren when he became abbot, and he was the thirteenth. This number did not change until Simon, the archimandrite of Smolensk, arrived among them; and from that time their number steadily increased.

God made St. Sergius as strong as one of the early fathers, a lover of hard work, and head over a great number of monks. From the time he was appointed abbot, the Divine Liturgy was sung every day. He himself baked the holy bread, entrusting this duty to no one. He also cooked the grains for the *kutia* and made the candles. Although occupying the chief place as abbot, he did not alter in any way his monastic rules, and he was lowly and humble with all.

He never sent away anyone who came to him for tonsure, but neither did he give him the tonsure at once. He who would be a monk was ordered first to wear a cassock and live with the brethren until he became accustomed to all the monastic rules; later he was given full monk's attire of cloak and hood; finally, when he was deemed worthy, he was allowed the *schema*, the mark of the ascetic.

After Vespers, and late at night, especially on long winter nights, the Saint used to go the round of the monks' cells. If he heard anyone saying his prayers, or making prostrations, or busy with his handiwork, he was gratified and gave thanks to God But if he heard two or three monks chatting together or laughing, he was displeased, rapped on the door or window, and passed on. In the morning he would gently reprove them, indirectly, by means of some parable. The humble and submissive would quickly admit their fault and beg his forgiveness. But if one was not humble, but stood erect thinking he was not the person referred to, then the Saint would patiently explain his fault and order him to do public penance. Thus all learned to pray to God assiduously, not to chat after Vespers, to work hard, and to have the Psalms of David all day on their lips.

In the beginning there were many hardships. At times there was no bread or flour, no wine for the Holy Sacrament, no incense or wax candles. The monks sang Matins at dawn with no lights, save that of a single birch or pine torch.

One time there was a great scarcity of bread and salt. The Saint gave orders that no one was to go out, nor beg from the laity, but that all should remain patiently in the monastery and await God's compassion. He himself spent three or four days without food. On the fourth day he chopped and worked all day making an entry-way at the cell of one of the elders, for the price of a few mouldy loaves of bread. At close of day, when he received the promised loaves, he offered a prayer and ate the bread and drank some water.

One of the monks, having had nothing to eat for two days, murmured against St. Sergius, and the Saint, seeing that all the brethren were enfeebled and in distress, assembled the whole brotherhood and gave them instruction from Holy Scriptures, saying, "God's grace cannot be given without trials; after tribulation comes joy. It is written, *In the evening weeping may pitch its tent, but joy comes in the morning* (Ps. 29:6). Now you have no bread or food, but tomorrow you will enjoy an abundance."

As he was speaking there came a rapping at the gates. The porter, seeing that a store of provisions had been brought, ran to tell the Saint, who at once gave the order for the gates to be opened. But before all else he commanded that the samantron be sounded, and with the brethren he went into the church to sing the service of thanksgiving. Going then to the refectory, they ate the fresh bread, which was still warm and soft, and the taste of it was sweet, as if honey were mingled with juice of barley and spices. When they had eaten, the Saint remarked, "And where is our brother who was murmuring about mouldy bread? May he notice that it is sweet and fresh. Let us remember the prophet who said, *I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping*" (Ps. 101:10). Then he enquired who had sent the bread. The messengers announced, "A pious layman, very wealthy, living a great distance away, sent it to Sergius and his brotherhood."

The following day more food and drink were brought in the same manner, and again on the third day. The Saint, seeing this, gave glory to God before all the brethren, saying, "You see, brethren, God provides for everything, and neither does He abandon this place." From this time forth the monks learned to be patient under trials and privations, enduring all things, trusting in the Lord God with fervent faith, and being strengthened therein by their holy father Sergius.

Blessed Sergius never wore new clothing; he wore only plain cloth, worn, dirty, patched. So shabby were his clothes, worse than those of any of the monks, that several people were misled and did not recognize him. One day a man from a nearby village came to visit him, asking, "Where is Sergius? Where is the wonderful and famous man?" The Saint came in from the garden where he had been digging, his attire patched and in holes, his face covered with sweat; but the visitor refused to believe that this was he of whom he had heard. "I came to see a prophet and you point out to me a needy-looking beggar. I see no glory, no majesty and honor about him." The brethren wished to send the man away, but the Saint, seeing their confusion, said, "Do not do so, brethren; for

St. Sergius feeding the bear

he did not come to see you. He came to visit me." And the Saint went and bowed low before the visitor, blessing and praising him for his right judgement. The visitor, placed at table at the Abbot's right hand, continued to express his regret at not seeing Sergius, the famous man. The Saint remarked, "Be not sad about it, for such is God's grace that no one ever leaves this place with a heavy heart."

As he spoke a neighboring prince arrived. The prince's armed attendants forcibly removed the visitor, and the prince then came forward and prostrated himself before Sergius. The Saint gave him his blessing, and they both sat down while everyone else remained standing. The visitor thrust his way through and asked one of those standing by, "Who

is the monk sitting on the prince's right hand?" On learning that it was Sergius, he was overcome with remorse, and after the prince's departure he went and prostrated himself at the Abbot's feet and begged his forgiveness. The Saint readily forgave him and blessed him. The man departed with firm faith in the Holy Trinity and in St. Sergius, later returning to the monastery to end his days there as a monk.

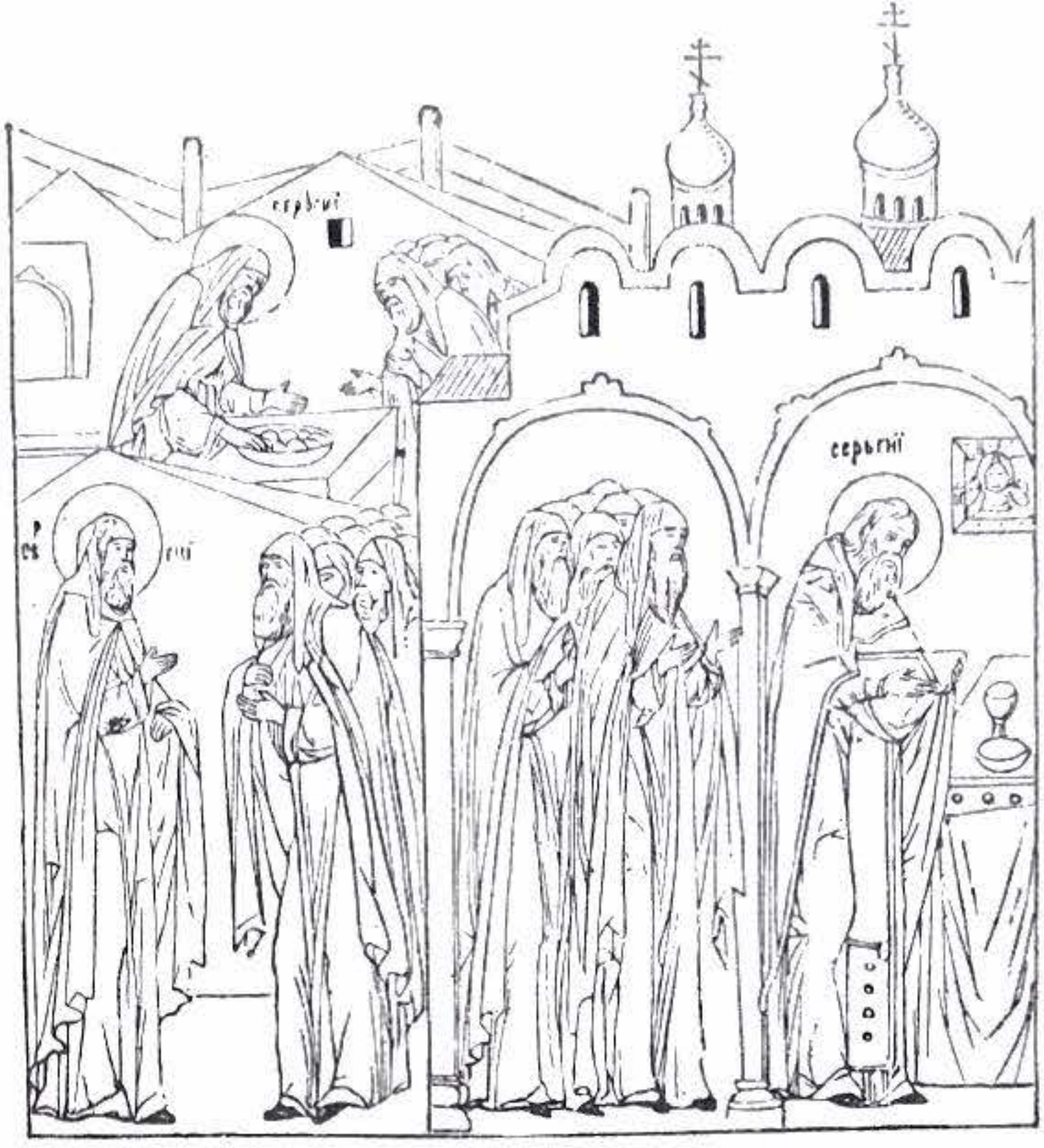
Many were the miracles which God performed through His chosen one. Owing to lack of sufficient water near the monastery, the brotherhood suffered great discomfort, which increased with their numbers and with having to carry water from a distance. Some of the monks complained to the Abbot, asking him why he had not built his monastery near water. The Saint told them, "I intended to worship and pray in this place alone. But God willed that a monastery such as this, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, should arise."

Going to a ravine below the monastery, he found a small pool of rainwater. He knelt down and prayed, and when he made the sign of the Cross over the spot, a bubbling spring arose which may be seen to this day, and from which water is drawn to supply the monastery. Many cures have been granted to the faithful from the waters; and people have come from long distances to get water to take to their sick to drink.

A certain devout Christian living near the monastery brought his sick son to the Saint and begged him to pray for him. The son died while the man was talking to the Saint. While the grief-stricken father went to prepare a grave, the Saint knelt and prayed over the dead child, and he was restored to life. The father, finding his child alive, fell at the Saint's feet and thanked him.

A long way from the monastery there lived a man possessed by demons. His relatives brought him to the monastery in chains so that St. Sergius might pray for him. The brethren sang a moleben for him, and he grew gradually calmer. When the Saint came out of the church carrying a Cross, the sufferer fled from the spot with a loud cry and flung himself into a pool of rainwater nearby, crying, "O horrible, O terrible flame!" By the grace of God and the Saint's prayers he recovered and was restored to his right mind. When he was asked what he meant by his exclamation, he said, "When the Saint wanted to bless me with the Cross, I saw a great flame proceeding from him, and it seized me. So I threw myself into the water, fearing that I should be consumed in the flame."

It happened late one night, the Saint, in accordance with his usual rule, was keeping vigil and praying for the brotherhood when he heard a voice calling, "Sergius." He was astonished, and opening the window of his cell he beheld a marvellous vision. A great radiance shone in the heavens; the night sky was illumined by its brilliance, exceeding the light of day. A second time the voice called, "Sergius! You pray for your children; God has heard your prayer. Behold great numbers of monks gathered together in the Name of the Everlasting Trinity, in your fold, and under your guidance."



At the upper left, the Saint prepares prosphora. To the right, he celebrates the Divine Liturgy for his monastic brethren.

The Saint looked and beheld a multitude of beautiful birds flying not only to the monastery, but all around the monastery; and he heard a voice say, "As many birds as you see, by so many will your flock of disciples increase; and after your time they will not grow less if they will follow in your footsteps."

One day some Greeks arrived from Constantinople, bringing gifts and a letter from the Patriarch. The Saint took the letter to the Metropolitan, Alexis, who ordered it to be read to him. The Patriarch wrote that he had heard of Sergius and his holy life, and he directed him to found a coenobitic community. The Metropolitan approved, and from henceforth life on the basis of community was established in the monastery, with all things possessed in common, and no monk holding property of his own.

Soon dissension arose; the devil, hating goodness, caused some to dispute the authority of St. Sergius. Hearing this, the Saint quietly left and, with the aid of St. Stephen, Abbot of the Makhrish Monastery, found a beautiful deserted spot near the river Kirzhach.

The brotherhood, when it found out, began visiting him in twos and threes. St. Sergius asked and received permission from Metropolitan Alexis to build a church, and many brethren gathered there.

Soon several monks from the Holy Trinity Monastery, unable to bear any longer the separation from their spiritual father, went to the Metropolitan and begged him to command St. Sergius to return to them. He did so, and the Saint obeyed without complaint. The Metropolitan, glad at his prompt obedience, sent a priest to consecrate the new church which St. Sergius had built, in honor of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God. The Saint elected one of his followers, Roman, to be the abbot of the new monastery, and sent him to the Metropolitan to be raised to the priesthood. He himself returned to his own monastery, to the great rejoicing of the whole brotherhood.

Once St. Stephen, Bishop of Perm, who had for St. Sergius a great spiritual affection, was travelling from Perm to Moscow, along a road which lay about seven miles from St. Sergius' monastery. When the godly bishop came opposite the monastery he stopped, bowed low in that direction, and said, "Peace be with you, brother in God!" The Saint, at this hour, was seated at supper with his brethren. Suddenly he rose from the table, stood for a moment in prayer, then bowed and said aloud, "Be joyful, shepherd of Christ's flock; the peace of God be always with you." At the end of supper he told his inquiring disciples, "At that hour Bishop Stephen, on his way to Moscow, did reverence to the Holy Trinity and blessed us humble folk."

One time, when Stephen, the Saint's brother, and his son Theodore were serving Divine Liturgy with St. Sergius, some of the brethren saw a fourth person with a bright, shining appearance and dazzling apparel, standing at the altar with them. When asked after the Liturgy, the Saint at first denied that anyone else had been present. But at their insistence he said, "Beloved brethren, what the Lord has revealed can I keep secret? He whom you beheld was an angel of the Lord, and not only this time but every time I, unworthy as I am, serve with this messenger of the Lord." And his disciples were astonished beyond measure.

When the heathen Tatar hordes were preparing to invade Russian soil, St. Sergius blessed the Grand Duke Dimitry Donskoy to go to war and conquer them. Facing the Tatar multitudes in the Field of Kulikovo, the Grand Duke and his followers began to doubt and fear, but at that moment a courier arrived from the Saint, who assured them that God was on their side; and the Russian armies fought boldly and conquered.

The Saint saw this battle with his spiritual eyes and the whole brotherhood prayed for victory at that hour. The Saint, by spiritual vision, announced the victory within an hour of its occurrence, and prayed

by name for those who had fallen. When the Grand Duke returned he hastened to give thanks for the Saint's prayers, gave a rich offering to the monastery, and, in fulfillment of a vow made to the Saint, established a monastery for which St. Sergius appointed an abbot.

The Metropolitan Alexis, being old, sent for St. Sergius and tried to persuade him to become his successor. Despite much urging by the Metropolitan, the Saint, unyielding in his humility, continued to refuse the honor, and he was allowed to return to his monastery. When Metropolitan Alexis died shortly thereafter, the princes tried once more to persuade the Saint to accept the rank of bishop, but he was adamant in his refusal.

One day the blessed Father was praying, as was his custom, before the icon of the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. Having sung the Akathist of the Blessed Virgin, he sat down to rest a while, saying to his disciple Micah, "Son, be calm and be bold, for a wonderful and fearful event is about to happen." Suddenly a voice was heard, "The Blessed Virgin is coming." Hearing this the Saint hurried from his cell into the corridor. A dazzling radiance shone upon him, brighter than the sun, and he beheld the Blessed Virgin, with two Apostles, Peter and John, in ineffable glory. Unable to bear so resplendent a vision, the Saint fell to the ground. The Blessed Virgin, touching him with Her hand, said, "Be not afraid, Mine own elect, I have come to visit you. Your prayers for your disciples and for your monastery have been heard. Be not troubled; from henceforth it will flourish, not only during your lifetime but when you depart to the Lord. I will be with your monastery, supplying its needs lavishly, providing for it, protecting it."

Having thus spoken, She vanished. The Saint remained in trembling awe and wonder. Returning slowly to his senses, he raised up his terrified disciple; but the latter flung himself down at the elder's feet, saying, "Tell me, father, for God's sake what miraculous vision was this?" The Saint, so filled with joy that his face glowed, could answer only a few words: "Wait a while, son, for I too am trembling with awe and wonder at this miraculous vision." He stood, wrapped in wonder, until finally he said, "Son, call hither Isaac and Simon." When these two came he recounted to them all that had happened, how he had beheld the Blessed Virgin with the Apostles, and what a wonderful promise She had given him. Hearing this their hearts were filled with indescribable joy, and they all sang a *moleben* to the Mother of God and glorified God. All night the Saint remained in thought on this indescribable vision.

One day the Saint was serving the Divine Liturgy with one of his disciples, venerable Simon, when the latter saw a flame pass along the altar, surrounding and illuminating it; as the Saint was about to partake of the Blessed Sacrament the glorious flame coiled itself and entered the sacred chalice, and the Saint thus received Holy Communion. Simon trembled with fear. The Saint, seeing that Simon had been deemed worthy of this miraculous vision, forbade him to speak of it: "Tell no one of this that you have seen, until the Lord calls me away from this life."

Continually chastening himself with fasting, working unceasingly, performing many unfathomable miracles, the Saint reached an advanced age, never failing from his place at Divine service; the older his body grew, the stronger grew his fervor, in no way weakened by age. He became aware of his approaching end six months before, and assembling the brotherhood he appointed his dearest disciple, Nikon, to take his place. The great ascetic soon began to lose strength, and in September was taken seriously ill. Seeing his end, he again assembled his flock and delivered a final exhortation. He made them promise to be steadfast in Orthodoxy and to preserve amity among men; to keep pure in body and soul; to love truth; to avoid all evil and carnal lusts; to be moderate in food and drink; above all, to be clothed with humility; not to forget love of their neighbor; to avoid controversy, and on no account to set value on honor and praise in this life, but rather to await reward from God for the joys of heaven and eternal blessings. Having instructed them in many things, he concluded, "I am, by God's will, about to leave you, and I commit you to Almighty God and the Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God, that they may be to you a Refuge and Rock of Defense against the snares of your enemies." As his soul was about to leave his body, he partook of the Sacred Body and Blood, supported in the arms of his disciples and, raising his hands to heaven, with a prayer on his lips, he surrendered his pure, holy soul to the Lord, in the year 1392, on September 25, being 78 years of age. After his death the Saint's body gave off an ineffable sweet fragrance.

The entire brotherhood gathered around him and, weeping and sobbing, laid on its bier the body of him who in life had been so noble and unresting, and accompanied him with psalms and funeral prayers. His body was laid to rest within the monastery of his own foundation. Many were the miracles that took place at his death and afterwards, and still are taking place. The Saint had no wish for renown, either during his life or in death, but by God's Almighty Power he was glorified. Amen.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
SAINT SERGIUS
IN ORTHODOX MONASTICISM

By HELENA KONTZEVICH

ST. SERGIUS WAS BORN within a century after the Mongolian invasion, when Kievan Russia with its secular and spiritual culture had been removed from the face of the earth.

Kiev -- this Constantinople on a smaller scale -- which was in its brilliance and development the first city of Europe, was turned into a pile of ruins. The inhabitants of southern Russia moved north, concealing themselves in the dense forests. Monastic life died out for a whole century. Only Novgorod the Great and the districts surrounding it were untouched by the Tatar invasion, and there life was not disrupted.

But little by little the Russian people began anew to build their way of life and spiritual culture. The principality of Moscow began to come to the fore, having in the 14th century together with Novgorod its epoch of rebirth and flowering. Churches were built and ancient Russia, like other Orthodox countries -- Serbia, Roumania, Bulgaria, and Greece -- furnished in this century iconographic examples of unsurpassed beauty.

Against this background of general inward advance arises the marvellous figure of St. Sergius -- a great Saint who shone out not only during his earthly life, but who has continued to live and act throughout the whole extent of Russian history. According to the chronicler he was "head and instructor of all monasteries in Russia." In the words of the historian Kliuchevsky, before St. Sergius there were founded in all only some tens of monasteries, while after him 150 were founded.

In the 14th century unbroken contact was maintained between Byzantium and the Slavic countries. We see in the Lives of Russian saints of that period not a few who travelled in the East, and Greek ascetics likewise came to Russia. In the reign of Prince Dimitry Donskoy, a contemporary of St. Sergius, there came to Moscow from Constantinople the venerable Greek Priest-monk Dionysios. He served as abbot in the Kamenny Monastery on the Volga, where he "handed down the Rule of the Holy Mountain." He was the foundation of a whole branch of northeastern monasticism. Besides Greek metropolitans, there were also priests and deacons who travelled to Russia. St. Lazar of Murmansk came from Greece to the far north and founded there a monastery.

Among the Russians who went to Mt. Athos we see St. Sergius of Nuromsk, later a close disciple of St. Sergius. Epiphanius, the biographer of St. Sergius, visited Constantinople, the Holy Land, and other holy places. St. Arseny of Konevets travelled twice to Mt. Athos. St. Athanasios, the founder of the Vysotsky Monastery, a disciple of St. Sergius, lived in Constantinople, and there transcribed religious literature. In the following century St. Nil Sorsky went to Athos and, upon returning, he introduced the skete type of monastic life into Russia.

Thus, thanks to this living personal contact, the spiritual currents reigning in Byzantium were spread directly to ancient Russia. In similar fashion this happened too in other Orthodox countries.

The friend of St. Sergius, Metropolitan Alexis, who had lived some time in Constantinople, was placed in the See of Moscow by Patriarch Philotheos, a well-known Palamist. Metropolitan Alexis knew Greek and, according to tradition, translated the Gospel into Slavonic. The century of St. Sergius was the century of St. Gregory Palamas, the century of the famous disputes of the Hesychasts with Varlaam and Akindin. This was the period when there was a special flourishing in the East among monks and laymen of the *inward activity*, that is, the purification of the heart from passions by means of constant invocation of the Name of God, the Jesus Prayer. A favorable condition for this activity is provided by the solitude of the wilderness. Following this summons, at the very dawn of Christianity an innumerable multitude of ascetics turned their steps to the Egyptian desert. "If a man will not say in his heart 'In the world I am alone with God,' he will not find peace," said Abba Alonius.

Like these ascetics, the youth Bartholomew secluded himself in a virgin forest. We see him like the holy Fathers of ancient times, an

example of meekness, giving the brethren an image of that preeminence which was indicated in the words of the Saviour: *He who would be first among you, let him be servant to all* (St. Mark 10:43). Equally with everyone he worked in the kitchen, chopped wood, carried water, sewed clothes and shoes for the brethren, rolled church candles, milled grain in a hand mill, and baked prosphora. In the course of time he was favored by the same fiery manifestation of the Holy Spirit while he was serving the Divine Liturgy, as happened to St. Anthony the Great, concerning which St. Anthony relates from his personal experience (see in *The Philokalia*, vol. 1).

St. Sergius propagated the spirit of asceticism to his disciples and to those ascetics of advanced spiritual life who came to him to learn from him the highest spiritual activity. The nearest disciples of the Saint, among others, were: Sts. Nikon of Radonezh, Cyril of Belozersk, Paul and Silvester of Obnorsk, and Sava of Storozhevsk. To them he transmitted his spirit. And thus there was established a *Northern Thebaid*, which produced saints and ascetics who had the pure spirit of the Gospel. Fifty monasteries sprang from his immediate disciples alone, while their disciples in turn established forty more. The heavenly promise made during the visitation of the Mother of God, and at another time revealed in the vision of birds flocking about his monastery, was kept; the monastery exists even today in spite of the ruthless persecution of Orthodoxy in the USSR.

The relics of St. Sergius for almost six centuries have drawn every year hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and performed miracles according to their faith. The Bolsheviks dared to take the relics out and put them in a museum. However, in the Second World War, fearing the anger of the people, they were forced to return the relics to the Holy Trinity Lavra. Thus the gates of the Lavra have not yet closed and the lamps have not been extinguished over the Saint's tomb.

The significance of St. Sergius in Orthodox monasticism is great. The tradition of St. Sergius is without doubt the mainstream of monastic sanctity in Russia. Himself a prophet and spiritual leader, a guide of souls and clairvoyant *starets*, a God-bearing holy father and great miracle-worker to this day, St. Sergius is a holy example who not only has guided myriads of righteous Christians to heavenly blessedness, but may yet inspire many others in these last days to undertake the hard path of *podvig*, whether in remote monasteries or in the world, that leads to salvation.

'FATHER HERMAN CAN HEAL THE SICK'

1968

THIS HAPPENED during the last week of January, 1968. I had the flu and was recovering very slowly. I was very weak and frequently had attacks of dizziness with difficulty in breathing. Often these attacks would occur at night.

Let me say, first of all, that I am not usually a believer in dreams and seldom remember one.

On this particular night I saw in a dream a crowded hospital ward with beds of the sick lined up on both sides of a middle corridor. With his back to me, I saw an old bearded monk, slightly stooped, wearing a black mantle. He was slowly walking along the aisle between the beds. A voice said to me, "Father Herman can heal the sick."

Immediately I awakened with a particularly bad attack. I began praying to Blessed Father Herman for help. I prayed that he would grant me healing, even though I was unable to visit his holy burial place as many have done. Soon I fell into a quiet sleep. I awakened feeling well and no more symptoms of dizziness or difficult breathing. About a week later I visited my doctor and he said that I was in good health.

Sister Maria Chiarotino

Santa Rosa, California

THE SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

TO LAYMEN AND MONKS

Of Our Father Among the Saints

ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV

XIV

DESPAIR

JUST AS THE LORD is solicitous about our salvation, so too the murderer of men, the devil, strives to lead a man into despair.

A lofty and sound soul does not despair over misfortunes, of whatever sort they may be. Our life is as it were a house of temptations and trials; but we will not renounce the Lord for as long as He allows the tempter to remain with us and for as long as we must wait to be revived through patience and secure passionlessness!

Judas the betrayer was fainthearted and unskilled in battle, and so the enemy, seeing his despair, attacked him and forced him to hang himself, but Peter, a firm rock, when he fell into great sin, like one skilled in battle did not despair nor lose heart, but shed bitter tears from a burning heart, and the enemy, seeing these tears, his eyes scorched as by fire, fled far from him wailing in pain.

And so, brothers, St. Antioch teaches, when despair attacks us let us not yield to it, but being strengthened and protected by the light of faith, with great courage let us say to the evil spirit: "What are you to us, estranged from God, a fugitive from heaven and evil servant? You dare do nothing to us. Christ, the Son of God, has authority both over us and over everything. It is against Him that we have sinned, and before Him that we will be justified. And you, destroyer, leave us. Strengthened by His venerable Cross, we trample under foot your serpent's head" (St. Antioch, Discourse 27).

XV

ILLNESSES

THE BODY IS A SLAVE, the soul a sovereign, and therefore it is due to Divine mercy when the body is worn out by illness: for thereby the passions are weakened, and a man comes to himself; indeed, bodily illness itself is sometimes caused by the passions.

Take away sin, and illnesses will cease; for they occur in us because of sin, as St. Basil the Great affirms (Discourse on the truth that God is not the cause of evil): Whence come infirmities? Whence come bodily injuries? The Lord created the body, but not infirmity; the soul, but not sin. And what is above all useful and necessary? Union with God and communion with Him by means of love. If we lose this love, we fall away from Him, and in falling away we become subject to various and diverse infirmities.

Headache may be caused by agitated and excessively forced mental activity.

XVI

PATIENCE AND HUMILITY

ONE SHOULD ALWAYS endure any trial for the sake of God with gratitude. Our life is a single minute in comparison with eternity; and therefore, according to the Apostle, *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us* (Rom. 8:18).

Bear it in silence when an enemy offends you, and open your heart to the Lord.

When anyone demeans or takes away your honor, try by every means to forgive him, in accordance with the word of the Evangelist: *Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again* (St. Luke 6:30).

When men revile us, we should consider ourselves unworthy of praise. If we were worthy, everyone would bow down to us.

We should always and before everyone humble ourselves, following the teaching of St. Isaac the Syrian: Humble yourself and you will see the glory of God in yourself (Ch. 57).

For this reason let us love humility and we shall see the glory of God; for where humility issues forth, there the glory of God abounds.

What is not in the light is all dark; likewise without humility there is nothing in a man but darkness alone.

XVII

WORKS OF MERCY

WE SHOULD BE MERCIFUL to the needy and to travellers -- the great lamps and fathers of the Church took great care over this.

We should strive by every means to fulfill the word of God: *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful* (St. Luke 6: 36). And again: *I will have mercy, aud not sacrifice* (St. Matt. 9: 13).

To these saving words the wise listen, but the foolish do not listen; and therefore it is said: *He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully* (II Cor. 9: 6).

The example of St. Peter the Breadgiver (Lives of the Saints, Sept. 22), who threw bread to a poor man, can inspire us to be merciful to our neighbors.

We should do works of mercy with a good disposition of soul, according to the teaching of St. Isaac the Syrian (Homily 80): If you give to one who asks, let the joy of your countenance precede your gift, and comfort his sorrow with good words.

XVIII

DUTIES AND LOVE TOWARD ONE'S NEIGHBOR

WITH ONE'S NEIGHBOR one should behave kindly, giving not even the appearance of offending. When we turn away from a man or offend him, it is as though a stone were laid on the heart.

The spirit of a disturbed or desponding man one must strive to encourage by a word of love.

If a brother has sinned, cover him, as St. Isaac the Syrian advises (Homily 89): Stretch out your garment upon the one who has sinned and cover him.

We all ask the mercy of God, as the Church sings: *Had the Lord not been in us, who would have been preserved whole from the enemy, and likewise from the murderer of men?*

In relation to our neighbors we should be, both in word and in thought, pure and toward all impartial; otherwise we shall make our life unprofitable.

We should love our neighbor no less than ourselves, in accordance with the Lord's commandment: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself* (St. Luke 10:27). But we should not do this in such a way that love for our neighbor goes outside the boundaries of moderation and diverts us from fulfillment of the first and chief commandment, namely, the love of God. Concerning this our Lord Jesus Christ instructs us in the Gospel: *He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me* (St. Matt. 10:37).

This subject is treated quite well by St. Dimitry of Rostov (*Works*, vol. 2, Instruction 2): One may see love in a Christian man that is untrue to God where a creature is made equal to the Creator, or where a creature is revered more than the Creator; but true love may be seen where the Creator alone is loved and preferred above the whole creation.

SERBIAN HOLY PLACES

Sts. Sava and Simeon of Serbia

SERBIAN ORTHODOXY, as such, begins with St. Sava, "the Light of Serbia," holy ascetic, founder of monasteries, hierarch, and scholar, who not only became the first Serbian Archbishop in 1204, but provided Orthodox Serbs with a holy example and left an imprint on their consciousness which is felt even today. Inspired by St. Sava and his father, the holy monk St. Simeon "the Myrrh-flowing," and under their heavenly patronage as well as that of the Most Holy Theotokos -- Who, particularly under the aspect of Her grace-bearing Wonderworking Icon the "Troerouchitsa[1]," is the special Patroness of Orthodox Serbs -- Serbia produced many great saints as well as a major Orthodox civilization permeated with Orthodox piety. Thus a fervent Orthodoxy was generated in Serbia which remained during the centuries of oppressive Turkish rule, and continues to exist even today. Throughout the length and breadth of Serbia, churches and monasteries were built in an almost dazzling profusion, many of which are still important holy places and centers of spiritual life. Actually, there are well over a hundred such holy places. Of these, only six will be included in this article -- Studenitsa, Zicha, Pech, Dechani, Ljubostina, and Ostrog. Other Serbian holy places as well as various Serbian saints, will be featured in future issues of The Orthodox Word.

1. The "Troerouchitsa" or "She of the Three Hands" is the Miraculous Icon of the Mother of God which was in possession of St. John Damascene, through which the great miracle of the healing of his severed hand took place. Both It and the Wonderworking Icon known as the "Mlekopitatelnitsa" or "She Who is the Milkgiver" were closely associated with Mar Sabbas Monastery near Jerusalem and with St. Sava of Serbia himself to whom they were given at Mar Sabbas in accordance with a prophecy. Especially venerated by Orthodox Serbs, these two Holy Icons are today at the Serbian Monastery of Khilandar on Mt. Athos.

Hidden beneath the surface of appearances, spiritual connections and interrelationships are formed which often elude the outward eye. Thus, few persons realize that the roots of Orthodoxy in America, with the exception of Alaska, lead directly to the holy places of Serbia. In 19th-century San Francisco, which was the first center of Orthodoxy in the United States, although the clergy were mostly Russian, the faithful were almost exclusively Serbs from the Boka and Cherna Gora regions. Serbian Saints were among the first to be invoked in America, their icons among the first to be venerated, and their feast days among those celebrated with the greatest devotion. Consequently it might be said that the Serbian saints became the "spiritual ancestors" and patrons of Orthodoxy in America, a connection with them and the holy places of Serbia being established through the pious Serbian pioneers in 19th century America,[1] and above all in the person of the American-born apostle of Holy Orthodoxy in America, Archimandrite Sevastian Dabovich of Eternal Memory, whose ancestors came from near Herceg-Novi, within the spiritual radius of the Savina Monastery, founded by St. Sava himself high on the cliffs above Boka Bay.

It hardly needs to be said that the general situation today in Jugoslavia, pertaining to religion as well as to other areas of life, is incomparably better than that prevailing in the USSR. Nevertheless, the Church suffered great tribulation in the early years of the present regime. A few churches were confiscated and some believers, such as the noted confessor of the Faith, Bp. Varnava Nastich, suffered imprisonment and much else.

Today, however, there is no religious persecution in Jugoslavia where, despite certain pressures and restrictions, the Church now possesses a sufficient degree of freedom to cause exiled King Peter recently to declare his full support of it, although some Serbian exiles still do not feel able to do so.

Atheist propaganda is still disseminated in Jugoslavia, but unlike the USSR the state strictly prohibits any blasphemous displays or writings offensive to believers; church services may be attended without fear of harassment; persons in hospitals, old people's homes, and other state institutions are permitted to follow the tenets of their religious faith, to be visited by priests, and to have rites performed; the Church prints books and icons; and in many areas there still exist roadside icon shrines.

The above examples as well as the fact that a convent, connected with the well-known Ravanitsa, is allowed to maintain a home for crip-

1. As for Serbian Orthodoxy in America today, much is left to be desired, chiefly in regard to the lack of monastic life and the disappearance of traditional Serbian piety as well as the introduction of non-Orthodox customs such as the use of pews.

pled children, raising these unfortunates in the full atmosphere of Orthodox piety, reveal the extent of the difference between the religious situation in Jugoslavia and that in the USSR,[1] where such things would be unthinkable. Although among men, monastic vocations are fewer than ever before, there are many vocations to the married priesthood and, surprisingly, there are more Orthodox nuns in Jugoslavia today than at any time since the medieval period, many empty monasteries having been transformed into flourishing convents.

The greatest threat to Serbian Orthodoxy in Jugoslavia today comes not from the state or from Communist oppression -- for by Soviet and other standards Jugoslavia can hardly be called a Communist country -- but from the disease of ecumenism. Within the Serbian Church as elsewhere in the Orthodox world today since the dark forces of modernism and ecumenism were loosed, certain hierarchs unfortunately view ecumenism and the apostasy of Athenagoras with an undiscerning or even favorable eye. Needless to say, the recent formation of an "Ecumenical Council of Jugoslavia," with participation of the Patriarchate, is most deplorable. Happily, however, the monks and nuns as well as most priests and laymen remain strongly anti-ecumenist, and if some kind of "unia" took place with the Latins, there can be no question that in Jugoslavia no less than among Orthodox everywhere, a faithful remnant would reveal itself, preserving true Orthodoxy undefiled and refusing, even unto martyrdom, to accept any "unia" with the heterodox Church of Rome. After all, 800,000[2] Orthodox Serbs, including many priests and monks, were martyred by devout Roman Catholic Ustashi Croats only 25 years ago in one of the most astonishing and little-known "programs" of systematic atrocity and extermination in modern history, a "program" carried out with the blessing of many high-ranking Roman Catholic clergy, a "program" which had the singular aim of liquidating the Serbian inhabitants of northern Jugoslavia, and which may serve the salutary purpose of forever preserving a healthy antipathy towards the Latin Church among the overwhelming majority of Serbian Orthodox believers.

1. In the USSR, where the Communist state demands infinitely more than "that which is Caesar's," where many of the bishops and other clergy are atheist agents of the Soviet secret police, and where the Church possesses no freedom whatever, the faithful continue to be persecuted and are subject to constant harassment and intimidation, while churches and monasteries continue to be closed down and sacred liturgical objects confiscated by the state. Likewise, monks and other believers in the Soviet Union often suffer incarceration in mental institutions where they are subjected to psychologistic harassment, children are forbidden to receive the sacraments or attend services, no religious books are allowed to be printed, and religious believers are deprived of the most elementary legal and other rights.

2. This is the most conservative estimate; some claim the number exceeds one million.

STUDENITSA

STUDENITSA MONASTERY -- the oldest, most important, and most frequented of all the major Serbian holy places -- was begun in 1183 by Zhupan (King) Stefan Nemanja, who was not only the founder of the Nemanja Dynasty and earthly father of St. Sava, but under the name of St. Simeon Mirotochivi or "the Myrrh-flowing" is himself one of the most revered of all Serbian saints. When the founder's oil-flowing relics were brought to Studenitsa from Mt. Athos in 1208, it became the chief Serbian place of pilgrimage and remained such over the centuries, pilgrims coming from as far away as Russia to venerate the Saint's wonderworking relics. Just as Serbian literature is said to begin with St. Sava's Life of his father, so too Serbian sanctity itself begins with St. Simeon.

An exemplary Orthodox monarch who brought into being a united and independent Serbia, thus giving impetus to the development of the great Orthodox Serbian civilization of the next three centuries, St. Simeon as King Stefan Nemanja embodied in his person the wisdom, justice, benevolence, and piety of an ideal ruler. A zealot of Orthodoxy, an uncompromising opponent of the Bogomil heresy, and a generous patron of the Church, he built churches and monasteries throughout his realm, richly endowing them with royal gifts, thus setting an example that was to be followed by the whole succession of Nemanja kings who, living without ostentation themselves, lavished most of their wealth on the building and embellishment of innumerable monasteries and churches, erected to the glory of God and the Saints, in thanksgiving and penitence, to the end of their own salvation and that of their subjects.

Leaving the world in his old age, the great and righteous Zhupan Stefan Nemanja, receiving the name Simeon, was professed a monk on the Holy Mountain, where he helped St. Sava establish the Khilandar Monastery. Taking upon himself many ascetic austerities and devoting himself to constant prayer, St. Simeon became an exemplary monk. Above all he provides us a notable example of a holy death, *painless, blameless, peaceful, and a good defence before the dread judgement-seat of Christ*, his last words being the final verse of the Psalter -- *Let every living creature praise the Lord*, which he sang from his deathbed, full of joy, at peace with God and with himself, his loud, clear voice penetrating the very walls of the monastery. Shortly after his repose, as the words *Glory to God on high* were being sung at the Matins, holy oil began to flow from his tomb, filling the whole church with a sweet fragrance and later working many

miracles. Returned to his native land, the grace-bearing relics of Saint Simeon were enshrined in a special chapel, later dedicated to him, within the main church of Studenitsa, which is consecrated to the Repose of the Most Holy Theotokos. Begun by Saint Simeon himself, the main church was completed by his son and successor, St. Stefan Prvovenchani, whose relics were also later enshrined at Studenitsa.

Not without interest is the fact that Saint Sava himself was for a while Abbot of Studenitsa, drew up the Rule of the monastery, and personally directed the painting of the frescoes, which include a prominent image of Saint Sava (Sabba) the Sanctified of Jerusalem, whose monastery he had visited and who was his own Patron. Also prominent, as in all Nemanja churches, is a fresco of Saint Stefan the First Martyr, who was the Patron of the Nemanja Family and thus became Patron of the Orthodox Serbian State.

Studenitsa not only became one of the largest Serbian monasteries, its abbot occupying an extremely important position in Church affairs, but the Wonderworking Relics of so important a saint as the great Simeon Nemanja made it the spiritual center of the whole country where the faith of all was strengthened with countless miracles and where many were drawn to become monks under the Heavenly Protection of Saint Simeon. And such it remained over the centuries.

Situated high in the mountains, about five miles from the river Ibar, Studenitsa is still a functioning monastery with fifteen monks, with vegetable gardens and orchards nearby. Although Studenitsa is not noted for ascetic rigors, it radiates a spirit of warmth and piety, reflecting on an earthly level the great mercy of God and His love for men. The Divine Services are celebrated by the monks with great care and beauty, and today as always the monks manifest an admirable kindness towards the many pilgrims and visitors. In this sinful age, holy myrrh no longer flows from the bones of St. Simeon Nemanja, but many miracles still take place through his intercession, and next to St. Sava himself, he unquestionably remains the most venerated of all Serbian Saints. On his Feast (February 13 O.S.), thousands of pilgrims still come to Studenitsa from all over Jugoslavia.

ZICHA

DEDICATED TO the Ascension of Christ, the rose-colored Zicha Monastery, reflected in the "quiet light" of the setting sun, is said to be a sight of indescribable beauty. *Zicha* -- the very word evokes immediate

response in the heart of the Serbian believer and brings to mind a wealth of historical-religious associations. *Zicha* means "golden thread," and it is indeed a "thread" linking the unseen world with our fallen world. It is a place intimately associated with St. Sava, who made it the Archiepiscopal See for all Serbia, and much there still evokes his presence.

Built by St. Stefan Prvovenchani or "the First-crowned," brother of St. Sava and second saint-king of the Nemanja Dynasty, who was crowned there by St. Sava in 1219, Zicha became the coronation church of the Nemanjas. In future years seven successive Nemanja kings were crowned there, and for each king a new door was cut in the rose-red walls, each of the doors leading as it were into a new chapter of dynastic, national, and religious history.

A monastery for over 700 years, Zicha is today a convent. On its grounds may be seen a small recently-built church dedicated to St. Sava, an offering on behalf of her son's soul, for whom the angel of death had come while he was still a youth, by a woman from Beograd who became a nun at Zicha. The fine frescoes of the interior, done in old Serbian style, testify to the fact that Serbian Byzantine iconography remains a living tradition. Shown prominently among the saints is the Blessed Nicholas II, Tsar and New Martyr of Russia, who is deeply revered by many Orthodox Serbs, among whom he has several times manifested his sanctity.

The nuns, who sing the full monastic services in the church, lead a life of quiet simplicity. Much of their time is taken up with tending the grounds and buildings as well as the cemetery, in which are buried many notable Serbian national figures, including the venerable Archimandrite Sevastian Dabovich, who was born in San Francisco in 1863 of Serbian parents and became the first American-born Orthodox priest and monk as well as the first great apostle of Orthodoxy in the English language. He died at Zicha in 1943 during the episcopate of the well-known Bishop Nicholai Velimirovich. The present Bishop of Zicha is Vladika Vasilije (Kostich), confessor of the Faith and esteemed spiritual director.

PECH

A LABYRINTH of separate yet connected churches dedicated respectively to the Holy Apostles, the Holy Virgin *Hodigitria*, St. Nicholas, and St. Dimitry of Salonika, the Pech *Patriarsha* lies in the foothills near the entrance to a mountain gorge, not far from the Albanian border. It is a veritable treasure-house of sanctity where the relics of innumerable

Saints are enshrined. On its grounds are orchards, beehives, and everywhere a profusion of brilliantly-hued flowers.

In the darkness of its sepulchral interior, a few candles and hanging oil lamps burn around the tombs containing the holy relics of many sainted hierarchs, reflecting the marvellous colors of the numerous frescoes that cover the walls and embody the whole history of Serbian iconagraphy from the 13th to the 17th centuries. Also at Pech is the much-venerated Wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God, the "Pechka."

Pech was founded in the first half of the 13th century by St. Arseny, who followed St. Sava as Archbishop of Serbia, at the request of St. Sava himself, who feared that Zicha was too exposed to foreign invasion. Thus Pech became the residence of the Archbishop and gradually became an important spiritual center. Designated by St. Arseny as his own last resting place, the Church of the Apostles at Pech became a place of pilgrimage after his canonization, which occurred soon after his death.

About 1290, after Zicha had been captured briefly and sacked by the Hungarians, the remaining treasures of that monastery, including the miracle-working relics of St Jevstatije, sixth Archbishop of Serbia, were transfered to Pech. Enshrined among the other holy hierarchs at Pech are St. Sava II as well as the tenth Archbishop of Serbia, St. Nikodim (1317-25), who was not only an extremely learned scholar, but also a *podvizhnik* who had taken upon himself many ascetic austerities and had lived for some time in the hermit cell of St. Sava on the Holy Mountain. During his episcopate at Pech, St. Nikodim, among other scholarly labors, translated into Slavonic the Typicon of Mar Sabbas Monastery near Jerusalem with which a close spiritual connection had been established by St. Sava, this translation being of immense importance for the entire Orthodox Slavic world.

In the 14th century, Pech became the center of the newly-formed autocephalous Serbian Patriarchate, and there the holy remains of the first Serbian Patriarch, the great ascetic St. Ioanikije, were entombed. Although the Serbian Patriarchate was abolished by the Turks, and the Serbs once again spiritually subjected to Constantinople, the Patriarchate at Pech was restored briefly in the 16th century under Mehmed Sokolovich, a Serb who -- although he may have remained a secret Christian all his life -- had been taken as a child and raised as a Moslem janissary by the Turks. Having attained the rank of Grand Vizier, he did all that he could to aid the Serbian people, even encouraging the restoration of an independent Serbian Church under the aegis of his brother, the monk Makary, who was raised to the rank of bishop and Patriarch in 1557.

Although today the Serbian Patriarchate is located in Beograd, it is not without interest that when it was finally restored in 1920, the Patriarch was consecrated at Pech, thus establishing a spiritual link with the past. Today Pech is no longer a monastery, but is looked after by a few dedicated nuns. And today as for the last 600 years, devout pilgrims come great distances to Pech to venerate the holy relics of the saints and attend Divine Services. Nearby are many caves, some still bright with holy frescoes, occupied some 400 years ago by hermit monks, including one of the greatest of all Serbian saints, the *podvizhnik* and wonderworker St. Efrem of Pech, who served briefly as Patriarch and then retired again to his cave when someone else could be found to occupy the Patriarchal throne. Perhaps someday, in a final lightning-flash of Orthodox piety prior to the consummation and judgement of this world, these caves will again become the abodes of hermit monks or nuns.

St. Stefan Dechanski

DECHANI

BUILT IN THE FIRST HALF of the 14th century by the righteous king and great martyr, St. Stefan Dechanski (Urosh III), the church and monastery of Dechani are situated not far from Pech in a quiet, wooded valley often described by visitors and pilgrims as "an enchanted place." Built of polished blocks of white, blue-gray, and rose-colored

ST. SIMEON THE MYRRH-BEARER

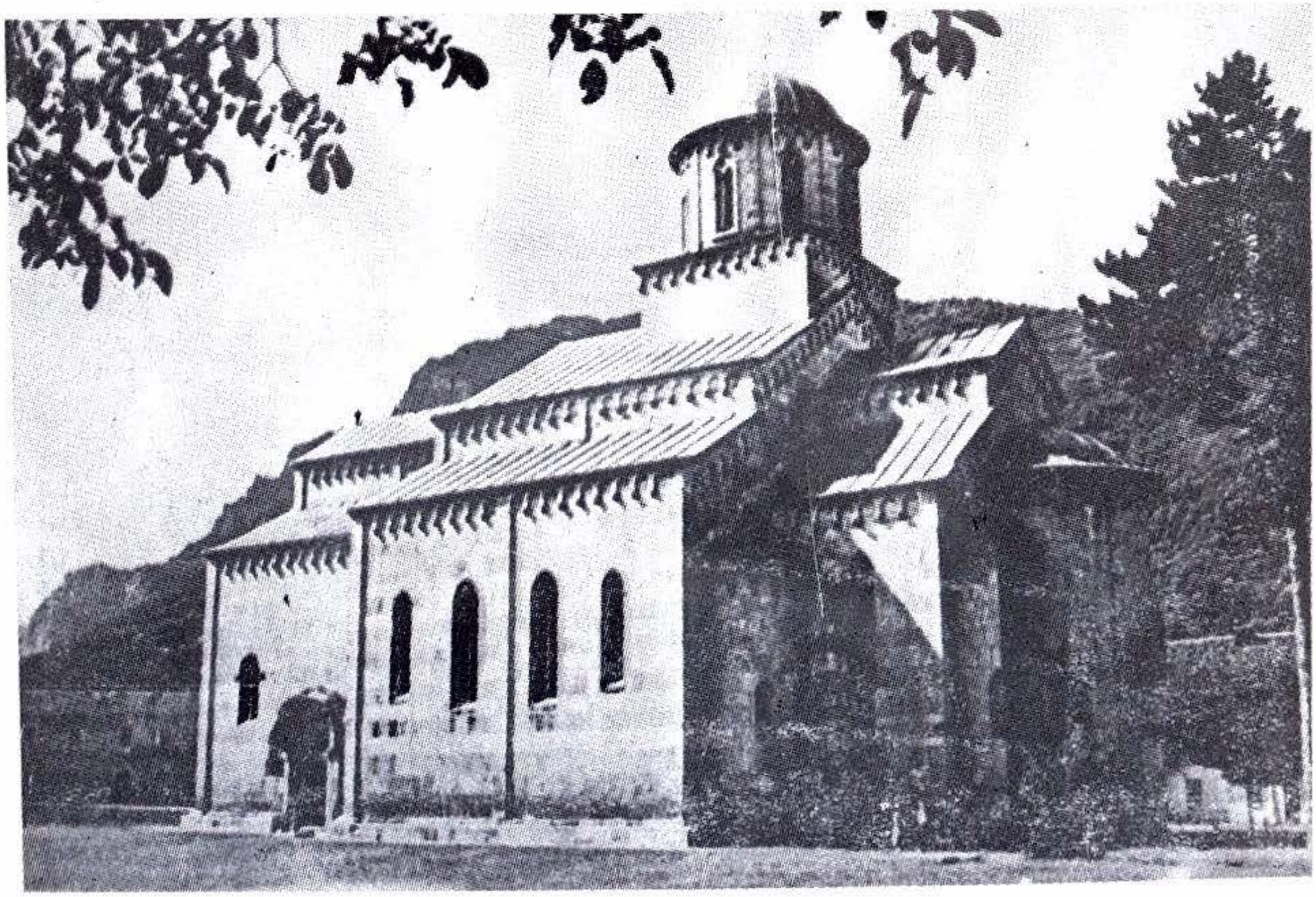
STUDENITSA

PECH

The Mother of God
TROEROUCHITSA,
Patroness of Serbian
Orthodoxy.

LJUBOSTINA CONVENT

DECHANI



marble, the beautiful church contains a profusion of exceptionally fine frescoes, including an iconographic representation for each of the 365 days of the Church calendar, as well as for every known event in the life of the Saviour and every stanza of the Akathist to the Mother of God.

Over the centuries the chief object of pilgrimage at Dechani has been the holy relics of its founder and builder, St. Stefan Dechanski, who is revered as a general wonderworker and great healer, especially of blindness and of eye diseases as well as of persons suffering demonic possession. Even many Moslems[1] come to pray before and venerate his holy relics, which repose before the iconostas in a deep red wooden sarcophagus covered with intricately-carved intertwining vines and flowers in gold, before which the monks and pilgrims prostrate themselves on entering and leaving the church. Every year prior to the Feast of the Saint on November 11, O.S., his robes are changed in a special service performed by the local bishop.

St. Stefan Dechanski, termed in the services to him "the second Job," was a righteous sufferer of afflictions. A man of deep piety and patience, he was blinded with hot irons and banished to Constantinople on the orders of his father, King Milutin, who mistakenly feared his complicity in a plot to depose him. But on the night of the blinding, St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra appeared to him in a dream, holding Stefan's eyes in his hand, and said: "Fear not! Your eyes are in my hands." In Byzantium, the kindly Emperor Andronicus received the blinded prince with every kindness and lodged him in the Monastery of Christ the Ruler of All, where he lived in great austerity and piety.

In accord with the miraculous appearance of St. Nicholas, his sight was indeed restored a few years later, when St. Nicholas on his Feast Day again appeared to him in a dream, this time blessing him. He awoke to find his sight restored, but fearing to let it be known, he stayed on at the monastery for some time in affected blindness, continuing to devote his time to prayer and the spiritual life. When he revealed to the Emperor the restoration of his sight, the latter advised him to keep the bandage on his eyes and tell no one. Only after many years, still feigning blindness, did he return to his native Serbia. King Milutin had by then repented of his terrible crime and gave his son a new principality. But only after his aged father died did the holy Stefan Dechanski dare to reveal that his sight had been miraculously restored by St. Nicholas.

1. For a detailed account in Russian of three outstanding miracles at the Saint's relics in 1954, all involving Moslems, see *Pravoslavnaya Zhizn*, Nov., 1959.

Ascending the Serbian throne, St. Stefan reigned for a few years, and during that time, in thankfulness for the restoration of his sight as well as for the defeat of the Bulgarians, he built the Dechani Monastery, having it consecrated to Christ the Ruler of All, the same dedication as the monastery in Constantinople where he had spent such spiritually profitable years during his blindness. The Feast of the church is celebrated on the Ascension of Christ. And because of his great devotion to St Nicholas he also built, a short distance from Dechani, a church and dispensary for helpless sufferers, dedicated to St. Nicholas. There he himself often tended the sick when he was not secluded in a cave near Dechani, where he spent long periods of time in prayer and fasting, or ruling and defending his kingdom with wisdom and discernment.

The life of the "second Job" and "great martyr," St. Stefan of Dechani, ended in 1336 when he was strangled at the behest of his own son, Stefan Dushan, and his advisors, who not only coveted the pious and ascetic saint-king's royal powers, but did not wish to have so saintly a man in their midst. The holy and righteous Stefan, however, had long been ready to meet the angel of death and receive his reward. Indeed, just prior to his murder, St. Nicholas appeared to him for the third time and warned him of his impending death. The circumstances of his death, in which his own son was implicated, add a final touch to the almost epic details of his tragic yet holy life during which he had aquired such great spiritual treasure -- an insight, purification, patience, and refinement of soul which came to him through a long path of suffering which he humbly accepted as the Will of God. Not without interest is the fact that St. Stefan Dechanski was a zealous supporter of the hesychasts and opponent of the Latinizing Varlaamites. Thus, Dechani itself was quite likely a center of hesychast spirituality.

The main object of pilgrimage at Dechani is, of course, the holy relics of its founder. Other important shrines at Dechani include one containing the holy relics of St. Stefan's sister, the nun-saint, Helena, who prior to entering monastic life was the Tsaritsa Anna of Bulgaria, as well as those containing much-venerated icons of St. Nicholas and St. Dimitry of Thesalonica, to whom separate side altars are dedicated. The monastery also possesses portions of holy relics of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Theoktist, and St. Simeon the Stylite.

Today there is still a small monastic community of seven monks at Dechani who continue to live the same dedicated lives as their prede-

cessors have for some six hundred years. Pilgrims and other visitors are always welcomed by the monks with a glass of the fine rose-colored wine for which the area around Dechani is famous. The life of the monks is simple and quite austere, the services long, and their food strictly meatless and monastic. The main support of the monastery, which today is quite poor, derives from the beehives kept by the monks. And today as always, the Saint continues to protect his monastery from the vicissitudes of history.

St. Nicholas leading St. Stefan.
Woodcut from a Serbian church service book of 1538, as is that on p. 117.

Still very much alive in the consciousness of the monks and local inhabitants is the great miracle by which the monastery was saved from desecration by the Turks. Once, several centuries ago, during the Turkish Yoke, there came to Dechani the Mufti or spiritual head of the Moslems, together with his mullas and their followers, with the intention of appropriating Dechani for use as a mosque. Throwing down his prayer rug outside the main entrance to the church, the Mufti began his prayers. But no sooner did he do so than the sky became dark, thunder was heard, and lightning struck the tower in which a quantity of gunpowder had been stored by the soldiers who had previously been stationed there, by special agreement between the Russian Tsar and the Sultan of Turkey, to protect the monastery. The tower was shattered and crumbled to the earth, the explosion felling many of the Moslems, while a stone lion above the doorway of the church fell on the Mufti and killed him instantly, as rain came down in such torrents that the church stood like an island in the midst of a stormy sea, surrounded by huge waves. In their confusion, a large number of the terrified Moslems were caught up in the swirling waters and drowned. In such an extraordinary way did the great martyr King Stefan of Dechani save his monastery. Thereafter the local Moslems stood in great awe of the Saint and made many gifts to the monastery, where today they are frequent and welcome visitors to the church and venerate the wonderworking relics of the Saint no less than the monks themselves.

In conclusion, it should be observed that St. Stefan Dechanski quite remarkably combined in his person many different aspects and types of sanctity which are rarely if ever combined in one individual -- Job-like sufferer and martyr, wise and pious king, ascetic, hesychast, and helper of the sick and afflicted. In St. Stefan Dechanski, the path of the much-suffering and righteous Job merges with the hesychast path of Mary and the active path of Martha.

LJUBOSTINA

POSSESSING WHAT IS unquestionably one of the most beautiful church buildings in existence, Ljubostina Convent with its elegant and refined beauty is an outstanding manifestation of the final flowering of medieval Serbian Orthodox culture. On the convent grounds, tubs of lemon trees exude the incense of their fragrant blossoms, a fragrance which itself seems to reflect the beauty of the church.

Ljubostina, which is dedicated to the Repose of the Most Holy Theotokos, was built under the patronage of Princess Militsa, wife of the righteous king St. Lazar. There, after the death of her husband at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, which in effect marked the end of medieval Orthodox Serbia as a sovereign power, Militsa entered the convent and became Nun Evgenija. She was followed by many other widows of those killed on that tragic day of defeat. Kosovo, however, only meant the end of an earthly kingdom. The path to the Heavenly Kingdom remained ever open and beckoning in the numerous monasteries and convents which existed in profusion throughout Serbia, holy places of prayer and ascetic purification which at the same time never ceased to remind the people of the spiritual wealth and greatness of their Orthodox Serbian Byzantine heritage. Ljubostina, spiritually and aesthetically is a magnificent example of this heritage, like a jewel from heaven dropped into this sinful and often tragic world, evoking the tranquility of the heavenly world, testifying to an enduring spiritual beauty beyond, to the One God in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Soon after her repose, the pious Militsa was revealed as a Saint and Wonderworker, many miracles taking place through her intercession and fragrant myrrh-oil flowing from her holy relics, which were enshrined there at Ljubostina. The convent still possesses a valuable

historical treasure in the large royal double-headed eagle emblem of the Saint-King Lazar, which was hidden from the Turks in the thick woods which still exist around the convent, and remained lost there for over 400 years. The true greatness of Ljubostina, however, does not lie in its rich historical associations or even in the outstanding beauty of its architecture, but rather in the fact that it is a holy place and has remained a living convent, its whole atmosphere permeated with many centuries of prayer, monastic life and spiritual vision. Ljubostina still contains a community of nuns, and like the 4th-century Desert Fathers of Egypt, the nuns of Ljubostina make baskets. They also weave rugs. These two tasks, besides prayer itself and the struggle of the spiritual life with its constant warfare against the demons, form their main labor.

OSTROG

PERCHED LIKE an eagle aerie, high in the mountains of Cherna Gora (Montenegro) in a steep, craggy gorge, is one of the greatest holy places in Jugoslavia -- the Monastery of Ostrog, built into the caves in the steep wall of a rocky cliff, a long path of stone steps leading up the side of the cliff to the entrance of the monastery (*see cover photograph*).

Not without reason has Ostrog been termed "the Jerusalem of Cherna Gora," for its style is not Serbian but rather is similar to that of the monasteries of the Holy Land, similarly built in caves and on steep cliffs. One feels that a spiritual kinship exists between Ostrog and the monasteries of the Holy Land, even Mar Sabbas itself, for both evoke the same spirit. And indeed, both encompass the caves of saints who dwelt there in prayer and *podvig*, with great effort ascending the spiritual ladder step by step,

St. Vasilije and Ostrog
A print appearing on packets of incense ("tamjan") sent today from Ostrog.

purifying themselves of every passion that they might reassume the primal Divine likeness, the image of God in which man was created.

For pious Serbs the name Ostrog immediately brings to mind the great Wonderworker, St. Vasilije Ostrozhsky, whose solitary cave is high above the main church and cells of the monastery and whose holy relics, which repose there, make Ostrog a major place of Orthodox pilgrimage. On April 29, O.S., the Saint's Feast Day, thousands of believers from as far away as Beograd come to venerate his miracle-working relics.

St. Vasilije was born in a village in Hercegovinia in the early 17th century of a pious peasant family. Extremely devout even from his childhood, while still a youth he entered the Trebinsky Monastery of the Repose of the Most Holy Theotokos, and soon took upon himself the cross of many ascetic labors. But as the flame of a candle cannot be hidden in the darkness, his holy life could not remain hidden and, against his wishes, he was consecrated to the episcopacy and made Bishop of Zahum and Scanderia (Albania). He ruled his diocese from the Tverdosh Monastery, where he continued his strict ascetic life and, like St. Nicholas, became noted for his beneficent deeds and loving kindness towards his flock. And like St. Nicholas he embodied the very type of the holy hierarch who in every way set an example of holy life for his flock and was a champion of Orthodoxy against heretics and schismatics.

With holy zeal St. Vasilije opposed Roman Catholic attempts to introduce the Latin errors and draw the Orthodox flock away from Divine Truth into the trap-like Papal sheep-pens, everywhere warning the people against the heterodoxy of the Latins and their serpentine schemes.

Seeing in the great reverence of the people for St. Vasilije a possible threat to their own power, the Turks attacked and burned the Tverdosh Monastery, although they were afraid to harm the Saint himself. Thus, St. Vasilije, who longed for holy solitude, journeyed into the mountain fastnesses of Cherna Gora, finally choosing as his *kellia* a cave at Ostrog where he entered upon an especially strict ascetic life. And from this cave he ruled his diocese, and protected the Orthodox flocks from both Latin schemes and Turkish abuse through constant prayer and the spiritual fragrance of his holy life, becoming noted even during his lifetime for his miracles. Gradually many disciples gathered around him, and Ostrog grew into a flourishing monastery with many monks following the same strict life as their beloved spiritual father. Begun in 1665, the monastery was completed two years later. St. Vasilije died in 1671, and his holy relics, which emitted a sweet fragrance, soon became the object of pilgrimage among both Serbian and Albanian believers.

Still very much present in the spiritual consciousness of Serbian believers,[1] St. Vasilije continues to be venerated as a great Wonderworker even by some nearby Moslems. Although Ostrog suffered a great loss when looted of its holy treasures by Roman Catholic Italians during World War II, today it is still a functioning monastery with a few monks. The main church is dedicated to the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple. There is also a cave church dedicated to the Raising Up of the Holy Cross. Not far away in the valley below is another branch of the Ostrog Monastery, called the *Doni* or "Valley Monastery" of Ostrog, which was built in 1820 by Archimandrite Josif and which is dedicated to the Feast of Pentecost. Recently a small monastic seminary was established at Ostrog.

Today as for nearly 300 years, every year prior to his Feast the relic-case of St. Vasilije is opened and the shoes changed. And just as always, they are found to be quite worn! Even in this godless age as man's flight from God and His Truth increases day by day, the Saint continues to work many miracles. In some respects St. Vasilije Ostrozhsky might well be called a Serbian St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, whose miracles are as numerous as the stars of the heavens. He heals the sick, protects from dangers, expels demons from the possessed, gives material help to those in need, and grants every type of help to his faithful suppliants. Also like St. Nicholas, who zealously opposed the Arian heretics, St. Vasilije is an opponent of heterodoxy. Thus, St. Vasilije is an important saint for our times, not only extolling the virtues of asceticism, solitude, and strict monastic life, but also exhorting believers to remain faithful to Holy Orthodoxy. And in these days of ecumania, St. Vasilije clearly warns us of the errors of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, in a loud voice denouncing the dark schemes of "union" being formulated at the Phanar and elsewhere.

O All-hymned Mother, Most Holy Theotokos and Protectoress of the Serbian Lands, manifested to us through Thy Holy Image of the Three Hands, Troerouchitse, Save our Souls!

All Saints of Serbia, pray to God for us!

J.G.

1. In America there are two Serbian churches dedicated to St. Vasilije, one dating from the turn of the century at Angel's Camp, California, and one at Chisholm, Minnesota.

AN ORTHODOX VIEW OF

HEART TRANSPLANTATION

By METROPOLITAN PHILARET

The world, including most people who would identify themselves as "Christians," receives every new attainment of modern science as an undoubted blessing to be accepted as a matter of course. Orthodox Christians, however, must be more discriminating, for our hope is not in this world that passes, but in eternal life. Here the chief hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad speaks on the latest such attainment, to and for those whose spiritual consciousness has not been totally deadened by modern worldliness and rationalism (Orthodox Russia, *no. 4, 1968*).

THIS AGE IS a strange age. We know that throughout the extent of human history there have been moments of spiritual and cultural crisis, of moral decline and restoration; there have been moments also of a so-called "revaluation of values." But only in *our* age has there arisen in the world a manifestation much more frightening and menacing: namely, the *loss* of values, their catastrophic disappearance from the life, from the spiritual and intellectual horizon, of contemporary humanity.

One may readily observe today the loss of normal conceptions of nation and family, the loss of the value of life itself, in itself and as the greatest gift of God, and the striving to get away from *the obligation to live* -- in the fantasy-world of narcotics, so to speak in a temporary suicide. And parallel to the disappearance of true values there appear counterfeit values. For today literally everything is counterfeited: Christianity is counterfeited, religiousness is counterfeited, the very Gospel is counterfeited; culture in its best manifestations, the striving for peace, *etc.*, *etc.* -- everything is steeped in lie and falsehood, and a man with a living soul and conscience suffocates in the reign of the lie and the counterfeit.

And in this stifling atmosphere of evident and undoubted spiritual decomposition, the "last word" is the most terrible of all. We speak of the newest "attainment" of medical science: the transplantation of the human heart.

Here before us is the most terrifying of all counterfeits: the counterfeit of life itself -- this greatest gift of the Creator! A man lives out his life, his powers ebb, the organism dies away, and the heart, this

center of the organism's life, is just about to stop... No medicines, no remedies or attempts to prolong, to detain this departing life, can help any longer... But now -- a solution is found! The man is given a new, strange heart, and with this is introduced into his organism a new, strange life, belonging to another man...

The heart is the center, the mid-point of man's existence. And not only in the spiritual sense, where *heart* is the term for the center of one's spiritual person, one's "I"; in physical life, too, the physical heart is the chief organ and central point of the organism, being mysteriously and indissolubly connected with the experiences of one's soul. It is well known to all how a man's purely psychical and nervous experiences -- joy, anger, fright, *etc.*, -- are reflected immediately in the action of the heart, and conversely how an unhealthy condition of the heart acts oppressively on the psyche and consciousness... Yes, here the bond is indissoluble--and if, instead of the continuation of a man's *personal* spiritual-bodily life, concentrated in *his own* heart, there is imposed on him a strange heart and some kind of strange life, until then totally unknown to him -- then what is this if not a *counterfeit* of his departing life; what is this if not the annihilation of his spiritual-bodily life, his individuality, his personal "I"? And *how and as whom* will such a man present himself at the general resurrection?

But the new attainment does not end even here. It is intended also to introduce into the organism of a man the heart of an animal -- *i.e.*, so that after the general resurrection a "man" will stand at the Last Judgement with the heart of an ape (or a cat, or a pig, or whatever).[1] Can one imagine a more senseless and blasphemous mockery of human nature itself, created in the image and likeness of God?

Madness and horror! But what has called forth this nightmare of criminal interference in man's life -- in that life, the lawful Master of which is its Creator alone, and no one else? The answer is not difficult to find. The loss of Christian hope, actual disbelief in the future life, failure to understand the Gospel and disbelief in it, in its Divine truthfulness -- these are what have called forth these monstrous and blasphemous experiments on the personality and life of man. The Christian view of life and death, the Christian understanding and conception of earthly

1. Since this was written, a transplant has indeed been made into the human organism of a sheep's heart; and an unsuccessful attempt four years ago utilized a chimpanzee's heart. A recent operation in California presents yet another frightful picture: the transplant of the heart of a suicide. (*Trans. note.*)

life as time given by God for preparation for eternity -- have been completely lost. And from this the result is: terror in the face of death, seen as the absolute perishing of life and the annihilation of personality; and a clutching at earthly life -- live, live, live, at any cost or means prolong earthly life, after which there is nothing!

How far from this is the radiant Christian view of life and death! Imagine a deeply-believing Christian who has labored his whole life on the fulfillment of the Lord's commandments and on the purification of *his own* heart, and who finally draws near to that Christian end for which he has prayed and for which he has been preparing his whole life; if suddenly one were to say to him: "Don't you want to live a while longer? Here -- we will cut out your heart and put in its place a different one, perhaps an ape's -- and you will live for a while yet..." What would a believing Christian answer to this but the words of the Gospel-- *Get thee behind me, Satan -- thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men* (St. Matt. 16:23).

See then that ye walk circumspectly, cried once the Apostle, *not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is* (Eph. 5:15-17). Oh, how circumspectly we must walk in our day -- with caution, lest we apostatize spiritually and fall into the snare of the enemy. For in truth our days are yet more evil than the times of the Apostles... And it was not for nothing that in these latter, already post-revolutionary days, one of the Far-Eastern archpastors prayed constantly to God thus: "Cut off the allurement of lies, loosen pressing temptations, and with the power of Thy Grace protect and keep all of us, and *grant our hearts to sense the truth.*"

For contemporary humanity for the most part has lost completely the feeling, the sense, the acceptance of truth and the ability to discern in its spiritual essence what is happening in the world. And the threatening, sorrowful prophecy of the Apostle is being accomplished concerning those who did not learn to love the truth: *God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness* (II Thes. 2:11-12).

Christian! Remember what life is, and what is death! And thanking your Creator for the most precious gift of His goodness -- for your *life* -- use this gift as is proper, so that at the end of your earthly life you

may, without clutching faintheartedly at this passing life, die in such a way that upon you may be fulfilled the joyful promise of the Apocalypse: *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them* (Apoc. 14: 13).

THE HOLY TRINITY

ONE IN ESSENCE AND UNDIVIDED

(*Continued from page 93*)

however, they immediately felt an estrangement. Justifying himself before God, Adam placed the blame on Eve. Sin divided them and has continued to divide and divide the human race. In freeing ourselves from sin we draw near to God and, being filled with grace from Him, we sense our unity with other men. This unity is far from being complete and full, since in everyone there remains some portion of sin. The closer we are to God, the closer we are to each other, in the same way that the rays of the sun become closer to each other the closer they come to the sun. In the coming Kingdom of God there will be unity, mutual love, and harmony. But the *Holy Trinity* is always unchanging, All-perfect, One in Essence and Undivided.

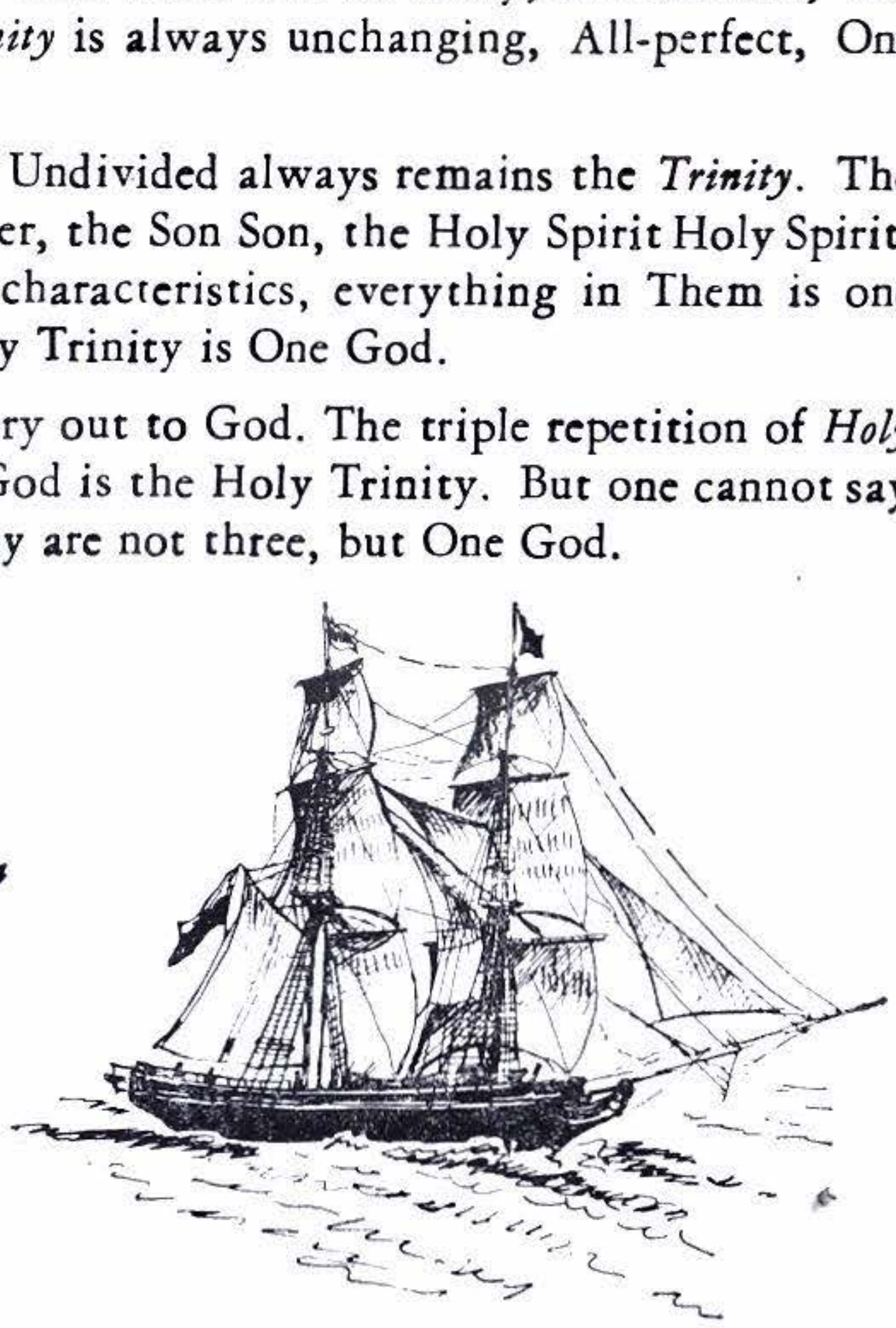
The Trinity One and Undivided always remains the *Trinity*. The Father always remains Father, the Son Son, the Holy Spirit Holy Spirit. Apart from Their personal characteristics, everything in Them is one and common. Thus the Holy Trinity is One God.

Holy, Holy, Holy we cry out to God. The triple repetition of *Holy* indicates the Trinity, that God is the Holy Trinity. But one cannot say *Holy* (in the plural), for They are not three, but One God.

NEXT ISSUE:

A Pilgrimage to the Holy Places of America

continued



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